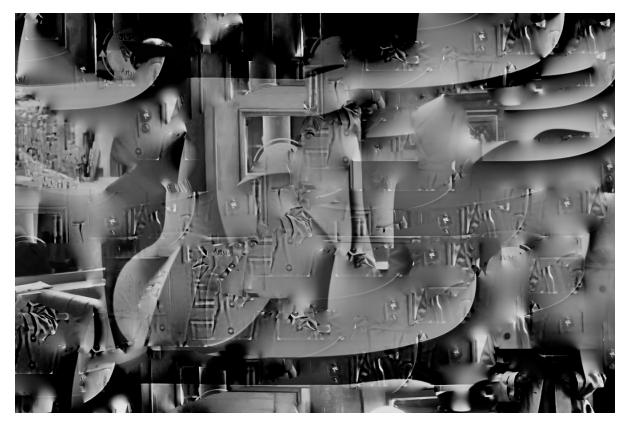☰

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GENEALOGY OF DECONSTRUCTION AND THE DIFFERANTIAL BREAK

PHILOFICTION   DECONSTRUCTION, DELEUZE, DERRIDA, DIFFERENCE

Genealogy of Deconstruction and the Differantial Break

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Translated by Jeremy R. Smith

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1) Differantial thought in general (Derrida and Deleuze) is first defined by its effects, for example those that it withdraws from the structure or produced within it, depending on whether it submits it to re-inscription or intensification. Each time, the point is to decapitate the structure, open signifying identities, undoing the agreed upon relations between the signifying and signified series, and establishing or re-establishing in the place of "real" communication – nevertheless bridled and limited by rules (object of science) – a generalized, yet ideal or simulated communication between the differential values or events "interior" to the undone terms. This communication must be related to an unconditioned genetic power that is itself more (Derrida) or less (Deleuze) caught up in the survivals of the logos, forming a differantial diversity that was immanent to the structure, and which couldn't find a way to express itself throughout the unilateral relations between identities ("common sense," the logos, etc.). Intra-systemic difference was a *bound difference*; it becomes a *free difference* when it is deconstructed or intensified, that is, liberated from these unilateral relations. However, the two operations do not seem to promise difference the same destiny. Its deconstruction engages it within an interminable logo-analysis and in wandering without salvation. The second is a genuine redemption of difference and an attempt to redeem the structure (in the sense that Nietzsche speaks of a redemption of becoming in the Eternal Return).

They are distinguished from the classical operations by two characteristics that define the untimely thought within its difference with the thought of modern times: a) they are not *position-takings* of a rational and voluntary ego with regard to the structure, but violent, aggressive interventions that re-produce (re-inscribe) the differential component enchained within the signifier by transforming and perverting it; b) whereas modern thought established certainties and was reflected by subjectivities, untimely thought is extricated (despite Heidegger's contrary opinion) from modern thought by delivering violent and irreversible events. The problem of right and the question of validity (*quid juris*) has been dismissed with the onto-theo-logical horizon of justification and are no longer relevant for a thought that wills not to distinguish between its principle and its effects, which not only seeks a principle that is expressed within the practices and techniques of *effects*, but which sometimes (Nietzsche) succeeds in establishing a condition "no greater" than what it conditions, a condition that metamorphosizes with the conditioned, an unconditioned effect among its effects. Deconstruction, like affirmation, has a transcendental meaning that assures it the autonomy of an auto-production, yet (perhaps?) not as radical as affirmation whose principle is entirely identified with its effects, as is the case of the Will to Power. However, it is untimely with other means, violent for other reasons, and is the instigator of irreversible events in metaphysics and the logos. This is why it escapes from the "critique" that, in its case, can only take on the form of a repetition that will select what there is within it of the possibility of affirmation, activity, and positivity. For example, it is hardly possible to object to it with monstrous associations like that of the thought of Being with structuralism, hermeneutic totalizations with structural differences. This conjunction of diverging stars in a sky of chaos returns violence back to thought, tracing to the logos a destiny of wandering and divestment and is expressed in some techniques whose components are not new but that their composition – which is not of the empirical and pragmatic whole – exceeds one another. And however that

conjunction is otherwise, *for it can only be evaluated, repeated, and not judged*, it is by itself an event below which it would seem unthinkable to want to deliberately return, because it will have left *afterwards* and "retroactively" a wake in which we naively call the past and philosophical tradition.

2) Is logo-analysis distinguished from doctrines that are brought into play here through a *specific difference* that would be like the internal and genetic definition of deconstruction? Only on condition of conceiving and practicing it as an *erased specific difference*, as an erased (differantial) genesis of deconstruction and whose "erasure" should be grasped at the level of its transcendental meaning as identical to this transcendentality. As a "technique" of disruption all meanings and of meaning [*tous les sens et du sens*], its specific meaning cannot be identified at the level of materials and effects of this disruption, but only located within the global functioning of the generative "machine" of disruption. Deconstruction alongside the most effective methods of modern thought (dialectics, psychoanalysis, structuralism, and ontological destruction) parodies and unveils them, enslaves them to ends other than immanent ones, articulates them by other means, within a general strategy that dis-appropriates and de-finalizes them for a general syncopation within thought. However, a transcendental and differantial functioning (relatively at least) presupposes that it would be distinguished between the texts, the methods, the operators, and the styles that cannot be of equal value. For their part, they contribute to what the process of deconstruction ab-solves or renders itself unconditioned in relation to these materials that are nevertheless constitutive at the origin. Their reciprocal labour does not make deconstruction function except if they are themselves transformed and erased by or within what they render possible. Re-inscription, like differantial re-production, is orphaned [*se rend orpheline*] of its "sources" and constitutes them "retroactively" in the erased and displaced origin of deconstruction. In fact, this differantial break that delimits re-inscription in relation to its old materials, the one that makes textuel re-production an entirely new non-logocentric genealogy of the text, defines the paradoxical relation of deconstruction to any such texts where it labours. For example, the Freudian text and the Nietzschean text provide identifiable dispositions [*dispositifs*] of deconstruction, concepts, techniques, and ends that are necessary for it immediately and whose deconstruction can only be postponed until later, in terms of the general strategy to establish. However, it is also Heidegger, Levinas, Plato, Saussure, etc., more or less explicitly or secretly, who provide the "operatory" concepts and structures of thought whose articulation constitutes the provisional generative cell of deconstruction, even if the meaning of this cell, its general function, has another – "Nietzschean" – origin if this still means something and to take an also erasable historical landmark, a proper name that must be dissolved and diminished within the deconstructive desire. Let us say that it seems to us that the most powerful form of the "deconstruction" machine, the one that attains an absolutely unconditioned transcendental generality in relation to the materials of the philosophical tradition, has provisionally receiving in the history the split-into-two [*dé-doublé*] name "Eternal Return" and "Will to Power."

Precisely, the power of Derridean deconstruction (does this exist…?) will be evaluated by its capacity to extract itself from the models and materials that it draws from within the tradition, to transform them into means of textuel transformation and production, to go further, elsewhere: in

accordance with its power to "surmount" and "dominate" them, to make itself unconditioned in relation to them. "Unconditioned" does not above all mean transcendent to these textual materials. To the contrary: this means rigorously immanent to logocentric formations, capable of generating them from what no longer has an origin, as its logocentric restrictions or specifications. Immanent and unconditioned, the process of deconstruction can only be so if it is of a transcendental functioning and – let us open up a problem without closing it up again – *machinic* functioning. It is in any case under these conditions alone that general writing will attain an unconditioned generality and that deconstruction will no longer find a transcendent (metaphysical, logocentric) limit within a text, a concept, a referent that would for its behalf resist deconstruction and would reflect itself, to condition it, within its functioning. This is our problem: to what conditions *can* deconstruction become a *sovereign* process whose domination over logocentric materials would be a transcendental and not technical domination? To what conditions does deconstruction form a *machinic rather than technical* process and one that finds within itself a transcendental limit rather than outside of itself a limit transcendent to its functioning? To what conditions is there a transcendental generality of deconstruction that we oppose to its transcendent generalization within a positivist interpretation? What does the constant reference to the "generality" of writing, syntax, and economy signify?

3) Despite the displacement of the displacement that makes up the whole game of writing, it is an inevitable requisite of the unruliest and most parodic thought that there is a syntax, a "matrix" or "general statement" of disruption and bastardization. It is dangerous to postulate the existence of an "internal" law of deconstruction that is capable of assuring the iteration and generativity of differance. But what should rather astonish is that it may not exist and, in its absence, preserves deconstruction from any return under the governance of the logos. It is this positivist postulation that we must destroy by articulating within an identifiable "matrix" the derivation of the derivation that affects differance throughout. Deconstruction cannot be left, not more than Descartes' method according to Leibniz, to the genius and the good will of an author. It would lose its singular generality and efficacy. The bastardization of Derrida's "practice" is such that it logically refuses the title "thought" and wants to be without genealogy: indeed, not a genealogy of the bastard, unless if this refusal is included within a sufficiently *complex* law to encompass it and such that it implies that nothing in Derrida returns to Heidegger, Levinas or Others, even though they are locally found in Derrida and not only as a text to deconstruct. This law is therefore the law of the "auto-"affection of deconstruction that displaces or re-splits its own instruments, the ones that serve it towards deconstructing others. Even though we thus have not defined deconstruction except through its negative effects and destruction, without considering it as a production of (textuel) differance, and this so for reasons that hold no doubt to its "conception" of generativity and affirmation – it is this mismatching affecting its own means (machinic and transcendental disruption) that is the *equivalent* of the *"specific" difference* of deconstruction. This is indeed subject to this deformation that is not "specific," it is a matter of a differantial break and one that is not only negative but constitutes a power of generativity, a positive value that retro-acts within the operators: the disruption of disruption is how deconstruction functions.

4) So we cannot say that the displacement of differance is carried out on a fixed soil, constituted

by the series of great authors of philosophy or by the writers who have changed the goals and functions of literature. When Derrida speaks of deconstructing "the" metaphysical text in priority, it is not a reference to a fixed soil and to a corpus recognized by all. For example, the access to the "metaphysical text" is always done through the mediation of the concept of presence, through its *ontological* determination as *presence*, a determination not in *extension* of the metaphysical field (by *such* authors), but its major internal character such that Heidegger fixed it. This is because presence enters into the matrix of the process: it is therefore itself affected by the effects that it contributes in producing, so that the "soil" is displaced with logocentrism in general (nothing of such exists) with its internal character, presence or the phonè (the interpretation of metaphysics under the ontologico-existential horizon). Everything is unequal in deconstruction, and for reasons of internal functioning. The authors, styles and methods do are absolutely not equivalent, but none of them remain or subsist as a landmark. It is not enough to carry out a logical and historical typology (the group of dialecticians, phenomenologists, Jewish thinkers, ethnologists, etc.) grounded on an interpretation of metaphysics in extension. Each of the deconstructed texts produces within its margins a "mode" of writing, differance, pharmakon, trace, gramme, supplement, mark, and dissemination: loci of effervescence that are developed in a certain conceptual region, shifting and displacing it. However, a *layout* [*mise-en-site*] of differance in relation to the deconstructed texts would come back to give an *interpretation* of logocentrism *in extension* and to finally reabsorb differance and the chain of marks, the points of dehiscence within a new logos. One productive operator of disruption is affected and is seen to imprint a deviancy. And yet, it took the insistence of an auto-reproductive matrix that assures the irreducible deployment of this generativity. It is a "systematic" de-generation, a "system" of de-genealogy within the statement of which presence plays both a cardinal and fragile role. In a certain way, the (displaced-erased) phenomenologico-ontological origin of deconstruction is unavoidable, and everything that is erased is not equivalent under erasure: even erased under *certain* of their concepts, transcendental ontology and phenomenology are not functionally equivalent to the Platonic, Saussurian, Hegelian, Rousseauist, or Lévi-Straussian concepts. And yet deconstruction is made independent from phenomenological ontology and any "cell": *at least, this is our task to attempt to make it independent*.

5) The inequality of the value of deconstruction's operators, the fact however that none among them cannot pass for a fixed landmark, a master-operator, a major value and one that rules over the others, and finally the persistence of a syntax, a matrix or a "form" of deconstruction that is compatible with this generalized inequality – these are the three branches of a unique, of a difficult problem that will never leave us again. And one will find its solution in a double and unique direction: a) must this inequality of value or function of operators of deconstruction not be formulated in the terms of an inequality of power to be able to become compatible with a generalized dissolution of metaphysical and logocentric primacies that certain concepts *seem* to receive within deconstruction? b) is there not one phase in the process of re-inscription where the *form* of it, its syntax or matrix, would precisely pass in turn to the state of differance, the inequality of value or difference of power, thus achieving in surmounting its legal and formal aspect, to be made independent of the very form of deconstruction or its logocentric origins? A

conspiracy or machination against its origins at the same time against any origin is the meaning of deconstruction as *differantial break* in relation to logocentrism. The problem is not only of the break carried out within the logos of Hegel or Plato but of the *immanent break* that delimits the process of deconstruction and withdraws it from the logos or makes it into a machine of the anti-logos.

Defining the *irreducible specificity* of deconstruction is not therefore to resort to a *specific difference*: an error for a "system" of non-specific differance. This specificity, in which derives the auto-affection of deconstruction, already leads us to a more positive, more productive notion of this practice. The problem is to correctly situate this immanent transcendental functioning of deconstruction by protecting it from any return to the subjective forms of the transcendental.

taken from here

translated by Jeremy R. Smith

Foto: Sylvia John

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